

COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATE/CHILDREN'S JUSTICE ACT  
PROGRAM ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES

July 21, 2006

A meeting of the Advisory Committee to the Court Appointed Special Advocate and Children's Justice Act programs was held on Friday, July 21, 2006 at the Richmond Police Training Academy in Richmond.

**Members Present**

Mike Hall – Chair Person  
Lauren Caudill  
Ruth Ann Cutright  
Sharon England  
Mindy B. Loiselle  
Nan McKenney  
Peggy O'Neill  
Claudette Overton  
Shawn Schwertfeger

**Members not Present**

Terica Hodge  
Michelle Clayton

**Staff Present**

Laurel Marks  
Denise Hampton  
Hope Hodgson  
Holly Oehrlein  
Melissa O'Neill

- I. Call to Order/Approval of Minutes: The regular quarterly meeting of the CASA/CJA Advisory Committee was held on Friday, July 21, 2006 at 10:00 a.m. at the Richmond Police Training Academy. The meeting was called to order by Michael Hall at 10:10 a.m.

Mike Hall motioned to approve both January and April minutes. Mindy Loiselle seconded the motion and the committee approved the minutes.

- II. Election of Officers

The Nominating Committee (consisting of Ruth Stone and Nan McKenney) presented the slate as: Mike Hall to continue as Chair; Sharon England as Vice-Chair. Both of these committee members were consulted and agreed to serve. Lauren Caudill seconded the nomination and the committee unanimously approved it.

**III.** Citizen's Review Panel – Nan McKenney, Virginia Department of Social Services provided a report on approved legislation that will go into effect July 1, 2006.

The group briefly discussed the CPS Regulations that are currently under review by the department. Copies of the regulations were previously distributed to the members. Members were encouraged to provide feedback to the department. After discussion on the topic of "willful misconduct", the committee requested additional statistics on the number of out of family incidents and the number of appeals the state receives for "willful misconduct". The committee expressed interest in hearing anecdotal information from the department on the subject in addition to the statistical information.

**IV.** CASA Program Update – Melissa O'Neill provided an update for the committee on the following CASA activities:

- Regulatory Revision – The regulations are currently being prepared for revision. The Advisory Committee will be involved with the process and is expected to receive the public comments at the public hearing.
- Funding formula: The funding formula will be revised in FY08 based upon the recommendation from CASA Program Directors Network. The recommendation includes a base allocation with a per-child allotment based upon the number of children served in the previous fiscal year. This change will result in funding cuts to a majority of the CASA programs statewide. The change is needed to address the inequity in the old formula that does not take into account the needs of programs serving large numbers of children or programs that expand services to contiguous counties. The Network recommended an \$18,000 base, however, DCJS was concerned that this was too low and decided to fund a \$20,000 base with the rest of the funds divided on a per-child allocation.
- Resource Development Grant: The on-line training sessions are being conducted throughout the month of July and into August and the final project will be the development of a fund raising manual that will be made available to each program including potential funding sources throughout the state. A report was provided from the evaluations from the one-day Resource Development conferences that were held in June.
- NCASAA Self Assessment for States – DCJS was required to complete a self-assessment in June. A report will be supplied to DCJS for compliance.

- Additional Funds for CASA - The General Assembly appropriated an additional \$100,000 to the CASA programs for FY07 & FY08. These funds were allocated to the programs on a per child calculation.
- CASA Program Improvement Awards – Local CASA programs were offered the opportunity to apply for \$5,000 grants to improve technology to assist with the implementation of COMET. If the program had fully implemented COMET, additional program improvements were considered.
- CASA Conference – The Statewide CASA Conference will be held October 13 and 14 in Williamsburg, VA. Advisory Committee members are invited to attend as guests.
- COMET Standardization - CASA Programs are required to use COMET beginning in January 2007 as a condition of DCJS grants. A workgroup of local CASA staff and DCJS staff has been formed to establish statewide standardization as well as to determine statewide outcome evaluation measures. The final document will be prepared for distribution in December 2006.
- Key Contact Judge Program – Judge Ellen White from Campbell County is the Lead Judge for our Key Contact Judge program in Virginia. Judge Soden from Henrico and Judge Dawkins from Alexandria have agreed to serve as the other Key Contact Judges for the state. The Key Contact Judges serve as resource judges for CASA and can help other judges who may want to start a CASA program or may have questions about their own CASA program. Further, the Key Contact Judges are a resource to the CASA program statewide.
- Southside Area CASA – This program has decided to cease their operations effective in July. They will be reviewing information over the next few months and attempt to re-start the program. Chesterfield CASA will be assisting with the supervision of the two volunteers that have current active cases until the cases are resolved.

**V. CJA Program Update:** Holly Oehrlein provided an update on the following Children's Justice Act activities:

- Finding Words Virginia: The June session graduated 39 students successfully and the April session had 38 graduates. Copies of the evaluation summaries were distributed to the committee. This program will be offered again in September and there are currently over 50 applications for 40 participant slots.

- The Improving Investigation and Prosecution of Child Abuse Conference – The May conference was held and the evaluations were distributed to the committee for discussion. This conference will be repeated October 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> at the Ramada Resort in Virginia Beach.
- Child Advocacy Centers Grant – Local Child Advocacy Centers were offered an opportunity to apply for funding to enhance capability to utilize the national database “NCA Track”. Seven centers applied for the funds and will be attending training.
- On-site Technical Assistance - Lexington, Amherst and Appomattox are the three locations that have or will receive assistance in 2006.
- Mandated Reporting – A public meeting will take place on August 3<sup>rd</sup> in Innsbrook to discuss EMS becoming Mandated Reporters.

## **VI. New Business**

- a. Schedule future meetings – Meetings for the next fiscal year were set as shown below:

November 2<sup>nd</sup> – Thursday  
 January 19<sup>th</sup> – Friday  
 April 20<sup>th</sup> – Friday  
 July 20<sup>th</sup> - Friday

- b. Mindy Loiselle reported on questions that arose from child trafficking – Two children have come forward regarding school personnel, are in foster care and doing very well.

## **VII. Adjourn:** There being no additional sharing of information, the meeting adjourned at 1:20.